

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1-20 (Cancelled)

Claim 21. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~A method of packing soft tissue gums around a tooth comprising the steps of:

selecting a gum packing assisting tool of ~~Claim 1, comprising~~

an endless strand of material,

the endless strand being made of a material which is easily sterilized,

the endless strand being made of a flexible dense material which stretches when under tension and which returns to its original shape when the tension is released, and which admits of few, if any, pockets for housing germs and contaminants therein,

wherein the length of the endless strand is less than the circumference of tooth around which soft gum is to be forced around, so that the endless strand can be tensioned to allow the endless strand to be placed over and encircle the tooth and to tightly grip the edges of the tooth when the tension is released,

wherein the endless strand tool has portions of its cross-section to be of circular configuration so as to facilitate rolling downward of the endless strand over the sides of a tooth to the gum line of the patient,

tensioning the gum packing assisting tool to stretch the tool,

placing the stretched tool over and around a tooth,

releasing the tension on the tool,

moving the tool along the tooth until the tool touches the soft tissue gum adjacent the root portion of the tooth,

tamping the tool to move the touching soft tissue gum against the root portions
portion of the tooth, and

removing the tool from the tooth.

~~Claim 22.~~ (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 21 wherein the moving of
the tool is accomplished via rolling of the endless strand of material toward ~~the~~a gum line.